

## **Claims**

What is claimed is:

1. A head mounted virtual image display unit, the unit comprising:  
a microdisplay;

5 an optical system for directing an image signal for viewing by a user, the image  
signal being generated in accordance with the microdisplay;

an optical system mounting structure for supporting the optical system within the  
field of view of an eye of the user;

a housing to substantially contain at least the optical system; and

10 a light shield, the light shield being integrated with the housing and positioned  
with respect to the optical system such that, in an open position, the image signal is  
viewed by the user with background light entering the optical system, and in a closed  
position, the image signal is viewed by the user with background light at least partially  
blocked from entering the optical system.

15 2. The head mounted virtual image display unit of claim 1, wherein the light  
shield is slidably integrated in the optical system housing such that the light shield may be  
slid between the open position and the closed position.

3. The head mounted virtual image display unit of claim 1, wherein the light  
shield is one of opaque, partially opaque, colored and polarized.

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